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ABSTRACT

In the ongoing debate over whether or what sort of multiculturalism should be provided by schools, the origin, evolution, and rhetorical function of the basic term "culture" have been unwisely neglected. The 19th century notion of "culture" implied a process of growth and development, of culturing an organism, or of the human organism becoming cultured. Educators must resurrect and maintain that dynamic imagery in their research and theory, rather than becoming imprisoned in a language of stasis. As a corollary, discussions of cultures or civilizations should be more explicit about what is inherited or borrowed versus a possibly unique synthesis. A weakness of the multicultural argument is that it ignores the fact that "Western civilization" incorporates so much more than the traditions of Europe and North America. As communication, commerce, and political and military relationships unite the peoples of the Earth into a global village, it is of diminishing educational utility to continue with the anthropological model of a plurality of separate and distinct, integrated cultures. When elaborated into the curricular rhetoric of "multiculturalism," this model may express a struggle for political empowerment, but it has no relevance to the historical realities of the development of world civilization. A sounder approach sees a historical sequence of ecumenes, areas of culture contact and exchange that produced cultural efflorescence, and returns to the notion of culturing through education. (SV)

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HOW CULTURE MISDIRECTS MULTICULTURALISM*

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ABSTRACT

In the ongoing debates over whether or what sort of multiculturalism should be curricularly provided, the origin, evolution, and rhetorical function of the basic term "culture," has been unwisely neglected. Having been accepted as a key term of anthropological discourse, the term conveys sufficient authority to misdirect political-educational energies. Viewing humanity historically, it is sounder to think in terms of an ecumene, and educationally, to return to the notion of culturing.

RC 019308

HOW CULTURE MISDIRECTS MULTICULTURALISM

> "Traditional Culture" is increasingly recognized to be more an invention constructed for contemporary purposes than a stable heritage handed on from the past (Hanson 1989: 890).
>
> In complex societies, the many microcultures and even macrocultures they comprise are inevitably the subject matter of social and political manipulation (Goodenough 1987:95).

Introduction: Some Meanings of "Culture"

As a crucial term of anthropological discourse, *culture* has been under recent attack. Influential critics within the anthropological discipline have argued that not only is it is theoretically imprecise, but that it obscures the process and data of field research (as well as the power relation between fieldworker and host peoples).[1] In ignorance of, or indifference to, this conceptual critique, elsewhere in the brick and ivory towers, conflicts rage precisely about the relationship of "culture" to the school curriculum. On the one side are those who advocate what they perceive as a traditional curriculum based upon "the canon" of Western "high culture" (epitomized by Socrates,

Sophocles, St Augustine, and Shakespeare), while pitted against them are those who advocate a "multicultural approach" that attempts radically to expand and alter the canon of foundational texts, by including representation from a variety of cultures and civilizations, as well as a greater representation of women.[2] So, an initial irony is that the term -- culture -- that now is being scrutinized suspiciously by a number of influential anthropologists should have become the focal point of a major educational -- and political-educational -- debate. A further irony is that school systems which have opted for the multicultural approach are finding it difficult to implement because -- to quote the New York Times (18 sept 91: B7) -- the teachers lack the training and the curricular materials to teach "Islamic, Ming Chinese or Aztec history".[3]

In the face of this politico-scholastic conflict, my anthropological colleagues who reject "culture" do not seem to have found an alternative which commands the consensual endorsement that once was enjoyed by that term and which provided a convenient guide for both empirical research and theoretical analysis, while lending itself easily to classroom instruction. Comparing their discussions with that, say, of the ancestral figure, Edward B Tylor, it seems apparent that for all of his Victorian biases and his ethnocentric assurance, he was more in touch with social realities than are they. So, one may well conclude that the various debates about culture and multiculturalism are as

confused terminologically as they are politically exciting. But, I am going to argue that this terminological confusion amidst educational and political conflict has been characteristic for many decades. The word "culture" has a history of being enmmeshed in the debates and politics of the scholarly world. "Culture" has not been a neutral term that scholars could define freely so as to advance their investigations; on the contrary, the term has reflected strong differences of ideological opinion.[4] So, one theme of this essay will be a very brief -- an overly brief -- review of the history of the term "culture" during the past century and a half. To the extent that I can allow myself the space, I am also going to be noting -- even more briefly -- some of the related concepts, in particular the concept of "civilization", and I shall be contending that we might achieve clarity were we to follow the suggestion made by Alfred Kroeber, years ago, that we use the term, oikoumene, which he took from the classical Greek, but which might in modern English simply be spelled as "ecumene".

In order to highlight the historical confusion and also to indicate how it is that we ought to consider the usage of the term, ecumene, I should like to remind you of several incidents, from the history of Western scholarship and art. At the turn of the 19th century, in the period just before World-War-I, the great German scholar, Max Weber, was

engaged in a comparative study of civilizations. In a fantastic exercise of scholarship, he examined traditional China, traditional India, ancient Judaism, classical Rome, medieval and modern Europe, and he tried then to characterize the way in which European civilization was unique. He contended (1920) that European civilization was peculiarly rational; the German term "rational" as he used it connoted being systematic and methodical -- epitomized by double-entry bookkeeping -- as well as being rational in a normative and esthetic sense. Among Weber's illustrations of rationality in European civilization was the development of the high art of painting, where over the centuries one could trace the painters' fascination with mastering the technique of visual perspective; the craft of being able to represent on a two-dimensional surface a view in three dimensions, so that the flat surface tricks the eye into thinking it is seeing depth. (As indicative of the formal rationality of perspective, I might mention that there also emerged a special subdiscipline of mathematics, "projective geometry," which [among other achievements] has formalized the rules of perspective, and which then has been employed by architects, engineers, and draughtsmen, and is now built into special computer programs for designing edifices and objects.)

Paradoxically, in the same era when Weber was writing

these words about Western rationality as manifested in its arts and architecture (and generally elsewhere), there were emerging a cadre of painters who were treating the craft of perspective as largely irrelevant; and a major stimulus to there so doing was the example of the graphic arts of east Asia -- China, Korea, and Japan -- which have relied on esthetic conventions lacking the organizing principle of perspective. So, at that point in Western esthetic history, the most esteemed, innovative, and influential of painters either minimized or frankly discarded a central technique that Weber judged had been paradigmatic for its high culture; instead, they embraced a technique native to a region quite distant, and not evidently "rational" in the Weberian sense. Moreover, shortly thereafter, a leading cadre of painters and other plastic artists were so influenced by work from Africa that they moved in the direction which they called Surrealism: toward what they felt was psychic reality, rather than the reality perceived by the mechanical optic of the rational observer. The influences of the plastic arts of Asia and Africa thus led the leading artists to abandon the concern with perspective, which Weber had taken as a distinctive manifestation of Western rationality.

Meanwhile, Western art has been moving into nonWestern countries. At the popular levels, the most influential form

has been cinema, and in music has been jazz and rock. While at the level of high culture, we are informed that the festival of "Mostly Mozart", which had been a highlight of New York City in 1991, was so influential in Japan that a variety of objects (food, drink, toys) were being associated with Mozart. One could even order Mozart sake in some restaurants (New York Times 1991a).

Of course, this movement of items from one region to another, from one culture or civilization to another, has been noted and observed by scholars for centuries. E. B. Tylor, considered the father of Anthropology, took this diffusion of cultural items for granted, and made it one of the focal points of his research investigations (1873). Ruth Benedict, during her early years as a student and disciple of Franz Boas, was initially so impressed by the diffusion of traits among American Indian peoples that she felt that the individual cultures had no integrity, but were each merely an aggregate or hodge-podge of cultural traits. She would then conclude her doctoral dissertation (Benedict 1923: 84-85) by stating that "culture" was built of disparate elements, combined and recombined. The notion that the result of this combinatorial process might be "an organism functionally interrelated", Benedict labelled a superstition. (Following her anthropological colleague, Robert H Lowie, she might have quoted Gilbert and Sullivan

to the effect that culture was a thing of "shreds and patches.") Yet, later, Benedict was to be so impressed by the esthetic unity of the way of life of each Indian people that she made of this the theme of her remarkably influential book, Patterns of Culture (1934).[6]

So, we perceive a tension between, on the one hand, a view that there is a social entity, called culture, characterized by a thematic unity, and manifest as a wholistic object that is distinctive in history and space, versus a view, on the other hand, that sees cultural traits, like movies, transistor radios, bicycles, and the appreciation of Mozart and surrealistic sculpture, as diffusing almost randomly over the face of the Earth. Since I just referred to Max Weber on Western civilization, I will now note a central paradox in the work of this great and influential scholar. I have mentioned that Weber devoted much of his energies to characterizing several important civilized entities -- notably Ancient Israel, Classical Rome, traditional China, traditional India, Medieval Europe -- and, as I indicated, in drawing the comparison among these civilizations, he thought that European civilization was uniquely rational. If now, one were to continue the discussion with Weber and ask of him the source of this rationality in Europe, he would have responded that it derived ultimately from the great prophets of ancient

Israel, and that the rationality of their message had been brought to Europeans via Christianity. Yet, on the other hand, Weber clearly perceived that as a religion, Christianity was not confined to Europe, but that, rather, it was one of about a half dozen of what he labelled as world religions, and he devoted considerable scholarly energies to describing the growth and impact of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. Now, what makes "world religions" into world religions is precisely the fact that they are enthusiastically even aggressively proselytized, so that they do spread among the peoples of the Earth. So, here is an apparent inconsistency in the work of this great scholar: on the one hand, he thinks of the post-Exilic Hebrew prophets as preaching a distinctive anti-magical message, whose overall import is toward the rationalization of life; and that via Christianity that message so influenced the growth of European civilization that it became and has been peculiarly rational; yet, on the other hand, he must have been highly aware that the Hebrew Scriptures had been influentially spread throughout the world by Christian missionaries, and if their inner message was a rationalizing or systematizing of the way a people organizes its life, then this effect would not remain a distinctive characteristic of European civilization.

Let us turn to some anthropological history.

Tylor's Notion of "Culture"

Conventionally, when anthropologists present the history of "culture", they begin with the words used by Tylor to introduce a book which he titled, Primitive Culture (first edition, 1871). What most of those who read Tylor's text do not perceive is that these words signalled a minor scholarly revolution: in Kuhn's phrase, a paradigm shift; and of equal significance a sociopolitical shift. Tylor's words (1873/1958: 1):

> Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, in so far as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action. On the one hand, the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes; while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future.

Earlier in that century, the word "culture" had had a different meaning (Williams 1959). It signified what a person

did to assist the growth of an organism. So, one could speak of the culture of trees, sylviculture; or of the culture of dairy cattle; or, one could speak of agriculture or horticulture; or one could speak of "physical culture" in order to describe the intentions and actions of a person who was trying to improve his or her body. Implicit in this usage is the notion of an organism that could naturally grow and that in this instance someone is trying to facilitate or assist this growth; that facilitating person would be a cultivator, i.e. one who cultivated trees, or plants, or dairy cattle, or the body of a potential athlete. Correspondingly, a "cultured person" had undergone training so as to be well and harmoniously developed, fulfilling his or her potentialities.

To keep this presentation focussed, I am going to ignore the subsequent transformations in the British usage of the word "culture"[8] and skip across the Channel to German institutions and ideals. Here in the early 19th century we encounter the notion of "culture-history" (Kulturgeschichte), a term distinctively associated with the great German philosopher, G W F Hegel. It was Hegel who asserted that the discipline of Philosophy was not just a timeless aggregate of profound thinkers, but rather that Philosophy had a history, which represented an unfolding and a development, a dialectical growth or progression. Hegel further contended that a similar dialectical development characterized human civilization, which

for him had emerged from the ancient Greeks, and which in its essence was a development of the human spirit, of human beings coming to mature self consciousness.

If one compares Hegel's logical schema with that of Tylor, what one observes is that Tylor has taken the Hegelian notion of growth and development and moved it out of the spiritual realm into the social and practical realms, and he has also democratized it, so that all the human beings of the Earth are participants.[9] We may recall that Karl Marx boasted that he had stood Hegel on his head; and, in fact, he had done so by changing Hegel's emphasis on the dialectic of the spirit to the dialectic of classes and the economy. In a similar fashion, half a century later, Tylor (1878) also stood Hegel on his head, but in this case, what Tylor emphasized were not economic classes but the basic characteristics of humanity, such as language and religion, and the set of basic discoveries, as tools, weapons, cloth, clothing, and the production of food. Thus, the elitist Germanic notion of Kultur underwent a sea change as it became foundational to the newly emerging British science of Anthropology, where it directed the attention of investigators to the basics of human social existence.

"Culture" for Boas and Benedict

Franz Boas had been trained in Germany. Shifting his academic discipline from Geography to Anthropology, and his

country from Germany to the U.S., he made of "culture" not merely a central concept but a rhetorical weapon. Among his principal antagonists were those who believed in the causal significance of race, or, as they also spoke, of blood. During the 19th century, with the flourishing of a Social Darwinist ideology, the racialist orientation would ssemingly have been buttressed by a scientific vocabulary, and would then have provided a rhetoric for explaining the observable differences among groups of human beings. As a guiding hypothesis, Boas believed that these differences should be attributed the environment, especially the social environment (but not excluding the biological environment, including such aspects as basic nutrition). This political goal led him then to replace racial heredity by culture as the causally efficacious mechanism.

The Tylorian notion of a unitary human culture -- or civilization -- carried the political freight of "grades" or "stages of development," and what Boas and his disciples chose to emphasize was cultural egalitarianism, or, if you will, cultural relativism, which would not rank the peoples and societies of the world, but which would instead assume that each society embodied a unique set of values.

Let me rephrase the problem faced by the Boasians. As good empirical scientists, they had to recognize the remarkable differences among the peoples of the Earth, but they refused to

account for these differences on the conventional hereditary basis that these were the outcome of race or blood. One had instead to account for these differences in social (or other environmental) terms, and this would seem to lead toward Tylor's notion of "culture", except that that notion was unsatisfactory on two counts: first, it implied that the peoples of the earth could be ranked or graded; second, it focussed on traits that could be and were easily diffused from one people to another, traits such as the bow and arrow, or the weaving of cloth. In this dilemma, Ruth Benedict, poet and humanist, came to the rescue of Ruth Benedict scientific anthropologist. The Tylorian diffusionist model had led her to view the various groups of North American Indians as each having made an arbitrary choice of cultural items, so that each native culture was a combination of disparate elements ("shreds and patches"). Instead, she now proposed an esthetic approach in which each Indian people appeared as if it were an object of fine art, possessing a unique integration. Even if the elements utilized in this work of art seemed to be common to other peoples, the form of integration made for a unique esthetic whole. Within this vision, it no longer mattered that both the Plains Indians and the Pueblo Indians shared the use of the horse and of the bow and arrow. Borrowing esthetic characterizations from the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, she could say that the Plains tribe had a Dionysian culture, whereas the Pueblo had an Apollonian culture. If someone had tried to rebut her characterizations by noting

that both sets of Indians had borrowed many traits from the invading Europeans, she could emphasize the wholistic integration. Or, if someone were to assert that a particular tribe seemed to lack that esthetic integration, she had a powerful response, namely that cultures were like organisms, or living works of art, so that if they were healthy they would be esthetically integrated, while if they were esthetically disintegrated, then this demonstrated that they had been subjected to traumas and shock. So, to symbolize this latter possibility, she introduced her book with a memorable quotation from a Digger Indian: "In the beginning God gave to each people a cup, a cup of clay; now our cup is broken."

If a culture were clearly not integrated, this should not lead one to cast doubt on the theoretical utility of the concept of culture, but instead should lead one to empathize with a people whose way of life had been subjected to terrible stress.[10] In noting this rhetorical ploy on the part of Benedict, I am not trying to dismiss the agony suffered by Indian peoples, but only to observe that this experiential distress should not deflect the analyst from rendering a judgement upon the adequacy or utility of her concept of culture, as a multiple object, rather than as Tylor's singular object.

Multiculturalism

The political and educational slogan of "multiculturalism"

gains its substance from the Boas-Benedict -- and general anthropological -- concept of "culture". I see the following themes as conveyed in "multiculturalism":

1) Every child (and every person) is not only a participant in culture, but should be regarded as being the product of a particular culture. The vision is of a one-to-one relationship between child and culture.

2. Given then that the child at school age is already a participant in a culture, and a product of that culture, it follows that, if schooling is to be humane and efficient, it should begin at that point, reaching toward the child in his or her native culture. It should not assume that, because the child is unfamiliar with some aspect of the dominant culture, that therefore its psyche is a vacuum, and the child is ignorant.[11] Rather the curriculum should be designed to deal with the child at the point of entry into formal education.

3. The culture of the school should reflect the population of the school. Rather than simply reflecting and reproducing the characteristics of Western civilization, or of some elite within the national society, it should incorporate materials from the cultures of its pupils. This will provide them with a sense of belonging and with models of

achievement; it will also be fair and equitable and will avoid the sin of Western chauvinism and ethnocentrism.

Especially to educators with anthropological training, the foregoing set of theses would seem not only plausible but attractive, so I want to indicate, however briefly, some of its problems:

1) Even among the peoples whose voice it is supposed to represent, multiculturalism is problematic and controversial. Typically in the reservation communities of North American Indians, it is the most conservative and traditional folk who object to bilingual and bicultural programs, while that kind of program is endorsed by the youthful culturally-assimilated political leaders. The conservatives believe that they should and will furnish their children with all of the language, cultural, and ritual materials they require, and that no outside educator, nor any institution of formal education, can be trusted to do this properly. Many Pueblo peoples view language, culture, and ritual as so intertwined that the erroneous use of any item may have disastrous consequences. What they want from the school is that it should prepare their children to secure appropriate kinds of (exterior) employment and likewise be able to

protect the rights of the community.

2. Many of the children who are most troubled in school are not the products of an integrated homogeneous culture, but are rather enmeshed in a lower class (or lower caste) marginal situation. As has been observed of so-called Chicano pupils: it is not only that they speak (what is judged to be) a poor grade of English, but also that they speak an inferior grade of Spanish; and most often a patois of the two languages intermixed.[12] Moreover, while the core language may be Hispanic, their biological heredity is more likely to be from a Native American people, although within their own traditions, they may not be aware of this linkage.

3. If children are to move into higher education, such as a college or university, then they will benefit from preparation in the relevant foundational subjects: mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, high cultural foreign languages. Lacking these, they cannot cope with the great traditions of the world.

I offer the foregoing comments not to reject multiculturalism, but rather to indicate that much as it may appeal to the anthropologically trained, it, nonetheless, suffers from both empirical and conceptual difficulties, and especially from the conceptual difficulties linked to the notion of "culture".[13] I will elaborate this later in the argument, but contrariwise, I

cannot resist quoting a defense of the multicultural principle from a comment upon an earlier draft of this paper by a student in Singleton's seminar: "Multiculturalism, for me, is a marvelous worldly flea market exhibiting a diverse breadth and depth of ideas, beliefs, behaviors, languages, stories, images and so on. The opposite of this I see as the company store" (Lloyd 1992). Clearly, that fortunate student finds multiculturalism to be liberating. Unhappily, what Ogbu's research (1992) makes clear is that multiculturalism works only for some individuals and some minorities. In some school configurations, there will be minority students who determinedly succeed and others who fail, sometimes with an equally determination, and this regardless of curriculum, multicultural or canonical (note Wax et al 1964/1989:chap. 6 and R. H. Wax 1967).

Civilization and civilizations

> We may no longer look upon civilizations as total structures in which every part contributes to a large meaningful whole. A civilization -- seen in Kroeber's cultural terms -- is only a temporary array of elements (Wolf 1967:451).

If there is confusion about the term "culture" and lack of understanding of its history, there is even more confusion about the term "civilization" (Wolf 1967). I do not have the time to even sketch the complexities here, nor to differentiate the

usages of the major European languages, where, for example, the French civilisation refers to "the totality of man's social and intellectual creations and arrangements", while for the German philosopher, Kant, it was equated with good manners and social niceties: Zivilisation was identified with the outward signs of a limited sort of education (Ringer 1969: 90).[14] The degree of confusion about the term can be shown indirectly in political-educational conflicts that I have already mentioned, where we have an educator pointing on a map to Europe, noting that it is part of the Eurasian land mass, and so in terms of physical geography, it is dubious as to whether it truly constitutes "a continent," at which point she instructs her students: "No view is right, no view is wrong and you might want to talk it over with your parents" (New York Times, 18 sept 91: B7). Poor teacher, she is quite unprepared to examine the notion of how the notion of "civilization" originated, and to what it might refer, and how this comes to be amalgamated with issues of physical geography.

If we were to consider Europe as a civilization (which underlies the claim to continental status), then we would have to note that it burst into flower as it came to absorb the technology and culture of previous and adjacent civilizations, most notably the Islamic civilization located in the Mediterranean and the Middle East[15], and to a lesser extent with the contemporary civilized societies of India and China. We

would also have to note that the Jews and the Muslims transmitted to the Europeans a glorious heritage from earlier civilizations, a heritage which they themselves had not only preserved and cherished but had elaborated and enriched. Moreover, the ethnic and cultural complexities of that heritage become manifest when one discovers that in many cases, the only thing Greek about "Greek science" was the language, for many of its greatest discoveries had been made in cities such as Alexandria, Egypt, which was surely a part of the Hellenistic world, but geographically and ethnically quite distinctive.

In his Huxley Memorial Lecture for 1945, the eminent American anthropologist, Alfred L Kroeber, drew the attention of his audience to the notion of oikoumene, taken from classical Greek, whose spelling and pronunciation I shall simplify to "ecumene". He noted that the ecumene of the Greeks "stretched from Gibraltar to India and dimly known China, [it] was the region where people lived in cities in organized states, plowed their fields and raised cattle, worked iron and knew letters" (1948:423). He further added that it might fruitfully be "redefined as a great web of culture growth . . . [wherein] inventions or new cultural materials have tended to be transmitted sooner or later from end to end" (1946 as cited in Hewes 1961: 73; for a collection of recent descriptions of that ecumene, see Canfield, ed. 1991).[16]

We are thus being reminded that human growth and creativity has tended to occur not within separate and isolated cultures but within their meeting and intermixture. Defenders of the classical canon point to the glorious achievements of classical Greece, but these were the outgrowth not of some pure and isolated Greek spirit, but the product rather of the encounter of the Greeks as traders, pirates, explorers, conquerors and slaves, with the fertile civilization of the Mediterranean ecumene.[17] Likewise, the amazing productivity of Europe and America during the past several centuries is testimonial to the functioning of what might well be termed, following Kroeber's lead, the North Atlantic Ecumene, just as we may now be seeing the locus shift to the Pacific. Some may prefer the lingo of Marshall McLuhan and point to "The Global Village." In short, the Boas-Benedict legacy of plural, separate, distinct, historically homogeneous cultures is both scientifically misleading and educationally irrelevant. When elaborated into the curricular rhetoric of "multiculturalism," it may express a struggle for political impowerment or dominance, but it has no relevance to the historical realities of the development of world civilization. The task rather is to change our basic terminological approach and see a historical sequence of ecumenes in each of which an intermixture from various sources of crafts, technologies, arts, and scholarship resulted in a cultural efflorescence. This would mean that we would stop claiming that Western civilization was in fact "western", when the participants and contributors have been

global for decades and even centuries. It would also mean that we would stop confusing temporary political dominance, as of the British Empire, or the U.S. hegemony, with being the central ingredient in the ecumenical flowering. To give a trivially obvious case: the fact that the Romans exercised political and military control over a province that they called Palestine, and the fact that his messages were recorded in the language of koine Greek (rather than the original Aramaic), does not make Jesus of Nazareth into either a Roman or a Greek, nor does it convert these messages into statements that are simple aspects of Roman or Greek culture.

Conclusions

> We intend to proceed with a deliberate naiveté, to mix observers and theoreticians, vignettes and opinions, debates and controversies from as great a multiplicity of voices as we can. We hope that the silent Western panopticon as well as the current American debate over decolonization can give way to new ways to theorize not just the 'other' or the 'third world,' but the global cultural ecumene, something which we assume is a decentered and decentering reality (Breckenridge & Appadurai 1988:3)

1.) As I have indicated, the 19th century notion of "culture" implied a process of growth and development, of culturing an

organism, or, later, of the human organism <u>becoming cultured</u>. We educators need to resurrect and maintain that dynamic imagry in our research and our theorizing, rather than allowing ourselves to become imprisoned in a language of stasis.[18] 2) As a corollary to the foregoing, when we do discuss cultures or civilizations, we should be more explicit about that which has been inherited or borrowed as against the synthesis or style which may be unique. 3) One of the weaknesses of the multicultural argument is that, so to speak, it has given away the store: What is called "Western culture" or "Western civilization" by now is incorporating so much more than the traditions of EuroNorthAmerica: Our number system derives from India. Our alphabet from the Middle East. A significant plurality of our vegetables and crops derives from the native peoples of the Americas. (The farmer who is supposed to epitomize solid EuroAmerican traditions is cultivating crops which were domesticated outside of that tradition.) And, as was indicated at the start of this paper, the logics of music and painting have quickly crossed national and cultural boundaries. 4.) Given the web of communication, commerce, political and military relationships, which increasingly incorporate the peoples of the Earth into "a global village", it is of diminishing educational utility to continue with the Boas-Benedict model of a plurality of separate and distinct, integrated cultures. If we are to continue with the concept of culture, we should return toward our Tylorian roots of a global

"culture or civilization," or, as I have suggested, of a world ecumene. However, our best strategy would be to envision culture in dynamic terms and to perceive our responsibilities as toward culturing not only the young, but ourselves throughout our lives.

Reference Notes

1. A pithy summary: "Some anthropologists see culture as enabling people to function in society; others see culture as an ideological construct that disables people by preventing their objective analysis of reality. Still others argue that it is reality that is culturally constructed while others that culture is fundamentally a system of classification" (Cruikshank 1992: 9, n. 4).

2.I assume that the curricular conflict is sufficiently contemporary and dramatic that one need not cite those who speak for one side or the other. Possibly we may need to be reminded that the idea of a "liberal arts" education, and of a canon of "great works" foundational to that education, itself has a history, and that one may cite key ideologists, such as Thomas Arnold and T. S. Eliot. However, it is noteworthy that some of those who might now be associated with the high cultural canon were themselves engaged in tasks which might be considered as corrosive of that ideal; I have in mind Diderot's association with an Encyclopédie that focussed on practical crafts and Montesquieu's effort to examine Parisian fashion through the imagined lens of "Persian" travellers.

3. The demand for such materials has created the opportunity for distortion, fraud, and the manufacture of credentials. Note the news item in Science (8Nov91:797) of an essay ordered by the Portland, Oregon, school system to be incorporated into classes, but which was "a hodgepodge of myth, religion, folk medicine, and

psi phenomena." Such events highlight Ogbu's lament (1992:6) that "many writers propose diverse 'models' of multicultural education that are rarely based on ethnographic or empirical studies of minorities' cultures."

4. Geertz (1973: chap. 1) places culture among the ideas that "burst upon the intellectual landscape with a tremendous force" seeming "to promise to resolve all fundamental problems, clarify all obscure issues." His own definition of culture, which I do not have space here to consider, is narrower and more specialized than that of Tylor.

5."The technical basis of our architecture came from the Orient. But the Orient lacked that solution of the problem of the dome and that type of classic rationalization of all art -- in painting by the rational utilization of lines and spatial perspective -- which the Renaissance created for us" (Weber 1920/1958:15).

"Only in Western painting does the rational use of lines and perspectives come into central focus manifesting a parallel drive toward rational calculability equivalent to the employment of the Gothic arch in architecture" (Martindale & Riedel 1958: xxii).

6. A recent insightful review of Benedict's career, including the transformation of her view of "culture," has been sketched by Handler (1990).

7. "it is worth noting that in quoting Tylor's definition, Lowie introduced the three dots that for so long tended to obscure the true character of Tylor's conception of 'culture' by eliminating

its synonymity with 'civilization'" (Stocking 1966:881 [Lowie 1917:5]). While most cultural anthropologists trace the origin of this crucial anthropological term to Tylor, Stocking contends (note 2) that this is a fallacious attribution, consequent upon Lowie's usage (1917); and he looks instead to Boas' work. The argument of the present essay outlines the historical complexities.

8."Before this period, [culture] had meant, primarily, the 'tending of natural growth', and then, by analogy, a process of human training. But this latter use, which had usually been a culture of something, was changed, in the nineteenth century, to culture as such, a thing in itself. It came to mean, first, 'a general state or habit of the mind', having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean 'the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole'. Third, it came to mean 'the general body of the arts'. Fourth, later in the century, it came to mean 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual'. It came also, as we know, to be a word which often provoked either hostility or embarassment" (Williams 1959: xiv).

9. "Especially after 1890, many German scholars expressed or implied the general view that the Anglo-French Enlightenment was 'shallow' in some way. . . . What they really disliked was a vaguely 'utilitarian' tendency, a vulgar attitude in the West European tradition toward all knowledge. They felt that many French and English intellectuals from the seventeenth century on

associated science and learning almost exclusively with the idea of practical manipulation, or rational technique and environmental control. . . The mandarins' [German elites'] own ideal of learning, developed as the direct antithesis of practical knowledge, was expressed in the words Bildung (cultivation) and Kultur"(Ringer 1969:85-86).

10. Concerning a symposium on "Education and the Cultural Process" held at Fisk University, March 1941, Redfield (1945/1963: 93,99) comments: "all the contributing anthropologists regard each of these cultures as having a necessary and important character: integration, or wholeness. In words used by Malinowski in his paper, each culture is 'an organic unit.' . . . [Margaret Mead] recognizes that modern urban culture is different in kind from all primitive societies. As the culture is changing rapidly and constrant, there cannot be one well-integrated culture."

11.Based on observations of American Indian schooling, a generation ago, Wax et al. introduced the notion of a "vacuum ideology" (Wax et al. 1964 and Wax & Wax 1971, both reprinted in Wax et al. 1989).

12.This sort of criticism of the linguistic development of minority children is often advanced by their teachers: ". . . beyond an hour of English each day, Mrs. Hernandez said, the children do not hear the language, at home, on the street, at play. Their Spanish, meanwhile, is so rudimentary that they do not know the words for common objects like clothing" (New York Times, 26Dec92: 7).

13. John Singleton has reminded me of the 1984 essay by the

educational anthropologist, Gibson, who implicitly adopts a Boas-Benedict schema of culture as she spells out four different meanings of "multiculturalism." Intriguingly, she ends by following Goodenough (1976) in opting for a fifth position, namely that multiculturalism is a normal human experience, so that "multicultural education produces competence in multiple cultures" (1984:113). With these assertions, she (and Goodenough) have moved from the Boas-Benedict perspective to the Kroeberian notion of the ecumene.

14. For the philosophes of the Enlightenment, "civilization, like man, was singular; the plural of the noun did not appear until the nineteenth century." What was critically problematic was not the origin of civilization or its diversities, but its progress (Stocking 1987: 18-19).

15.The further complexity is the temporary flowering of a Jewish renaissance within the Islamic dominions, and the role of Jews in mediating classical culture to the scholarly communities of the Muslim and Christian worlds.

16. Despite the persistence of major styles of civilization in local regions, such as China, Kroeber could view 'the holistic concept of the Oikoumene as a genuine historical unit of interconnected development of higher civilization in Asia, Europe, and North Africa. . . . Within what the Greeks knew as the Oikoumene, the traced and specific interconnections are now so many

that a really separate history of any culture in the area can no longer be thought of' (1953:267)" (Hewes 196173).

17. Especially during the 19th century, classical educators tended to view Greece in heroic isolation from the other participants in that ecumene. This view was accentuated by the account in Herodotus of the great combat between Greece and Persia, which made the Greek military triumph seem crucial to the flowering of high culture. Once one realizes and appreciates the diffusion and interpenetration of ideas and inventions, it becomes interesting to speculate about the consequences of a Persian victory. Possibly the most significant difference would have been that the language of the ecumene would have become trader's Persian rather than koine Greek, so that 19th century European educators would have spoken of "The glory that was Persia"!

18. The static orientation had its utility in salvage ethnography, but nevertheless was especially misleading about North American Indian peoples, who thus became frozen in ethnological time. In anthropological (and popular) discourse, for example, the Sioux (and other Plains tribes) were for long described as if there only existence had been as horse nomads, parasitic on the buffalo. Correspondingly, social arrangements and land usage as misperceived by colonial administrators were elevated into tribal norms to be enforced by courts and governmental agencies as imperishably traditional (described by Hanson [1989] for the Maori, Thomas [1992] for the South Pacific, and by Bernard Cohn [1992] for

British India).

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